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Thank you for this opportunity to share our family's story regarding the ongoing staffing shortages in disability services across the state of Minnesota.

My son Sam is 26 years old. He has complex medical and developmental challenges and we determined a day program for adults with disabilities to be the best setting for him after completing his school programs in 2017. Sam lives at home with my husband and me in Lakeville, MN.

Prior to March 2020 and the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Sam attended Midwest Special Services in Eagan, MN, Monday-Friday. He rode the bus, enjoyed socializing with friends, created art and music, improved his communication skills, learned new skills and stayed physically active. Sam really enjoyed his days at MSS.

Although MSS stopped in-person services in March, they started remote programming in April via Zoom. The class schedule was (still is) quite robust and we are grateful. MSS-Eagan reopened for in-person services in August of 2020, however, Sam has not yet been asked back due to staffing shortages. Sam spends every day at home, tuning into remote programming. Sam needs maximum assistance for activities of daily living and both my husband and I have adjusted our work schedules so that one of us is always with him. Though the remote schedule fills a certain socialization need, it is not the same as working and interacting with live people. He is missing the opportunity to be with more/different people, in other environments, opportunities to get out into the community with a group of peers. He is missing opportunities to work with volunteers and engage in live, group programming.

Sam wants to return to MSS. We want Sam to return to MSS. Finding more people to work at MSS so that staffing levels allow Sam's return is extremely important. Wages for workers in the field of disability services need to increase to a level that is competitive with other industries. The work is certainly meaningful, but it is also very hard. It's vitally important work with the health and happiness of my son and many other people at its core.

Please support The Best Life Alliance proposal, [House File 3100/Senate File 2771](#), which proposes ongoing and regularly scheduled updates to the Disability Waiver Rate System aimed at increasing the wages and benefits of Direct Support Professionals working in waived disability services.

Thank you.